

REMARKS

Claims 1-55 are pending in the application. Of the claims, Claims 1, 14, 31, 44 and 55 are independent claims. Claims 1-20 and 22-55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and/or 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). These rejections are traversed.

Regarding Objections to the Specification

With regard to the objection to the specification, the Applicants have amended the abstract of the disclosure. Removal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Regarding Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claims 1-5, 31-35, and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Horn (U.S. Patent No. 5,938,767).

Before discussing the cited reference however, a brief review of the Applicant's disclosure may be helpful. The invention generally relates to a technique for regulating data flow to a network. A mechanical lock assembly having multiple activated positions is activated by turning a key. An electronic circuit senses a position of the key in the lock assembly to regulate a flow of data information to a target network based on data flow rules selected by the position of the key.

Cited prior art, Horn discusses a locking device that disables transmission of a dialing command to request access to the Internet. While the locking device is in a locked state, data transmission is disabled and data reception (voicemail and fax) is enabled. (*See Fig. 2, steps 52, 54, 56.*)

The system described by Horn does not teach or suggest at least the Applicants' claimed "mechanical lock assembly having multiple activated positions". In contrast, Horn discusses a switch that is either on or off. Furthermore, Horn does not teach or suggest the Applicants' claimed "electronic circuit that senses a position of the key in the lock assembly to enable regulate a flow of data information to a target network based on data flow rules selected by the position of the key" as recited by claim 1. Horn merely discusses a locking device for disabling all transmission to a network.

In contrast to the Applicants' disclosed apparatus for regulating data flow between networks, Horn merely discusses a system in which transmission to a network is either enabled or disabled dependent on the state of a locking device. Thus, Horn does not teach or suggest regulating access to the Internet based on data flow rules selected by the position of the key. In contrast, in the system discussed by Horn, all users of the computer are denied access to the Internet while the locking device is in a locked state.

Claims 1-5 are dependent on Claim 1 and thus include this limitation over the prior art. Independent apparatus claim 55 also includes this limitation over the prior art. Independent claim 31 recites a like distinction in terms of a method and thus similarly patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

Accordingly the rejection under § 102(e) is believed to be overcome.

Regarding Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1, 5-16, 18-20, 24-26, 29-31, and 35-54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reardon in view of Horn. Claims 17, 22, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reardon in view of Horn as applied to claim 14 above, and further in view of Antur et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,212, 558.) Claims 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,212,635 to Reardon in view of Horn as applied to claim 14 above, and further in view of Baehr et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,884,025.) These rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Cited prior art, Reardon discusses use of a security gateway to protect security of files stored in a computer's memory system. The security gateway can limit disk and network access when the computer is connected to the Internet and can enforce a table of Internet sites that a user is allowed to visit.

Cited prior art, Antur discusses the use of firewalls between different networks. (*See Fig. 1.*)

Cited prior art, Baehr discusses a firewall for filtering data packets between a network to be protected (private network) and another network (public network). (*See Abstract.*)

Reardon does not teach or suggest the Applicants' "electronic circuit that senses a position of the key in the lock assembly to regulate a flow of data information to a target network

based on data flow rules selected by the position of the key” as recited by the Applicants in claim 1. In contrast, Reardon merely discusses limiting a computer user’s disk and network accesses based on access rights assigned to the user and stored in the computer. (*See Col. 11, lines 21-32.*) Horn discusses a system in which all users of the computer are denied access to the Internet while a locking device is in a locked state. There is no suggestion to modify Reardon to add a mechanical lock assembly because each user’s use of the computer is already limited by the assigned access rights. Even in combination, Reardon and Horn do not suggest the Applicants’ invention for regulating data flow to a network.

Independent Claim 31 recites a like distinction in terms of a method and thus is non-obvious over the prior art. In addition, patentably distinguishable claim language of independent Claims 14 reads, in pertinent part:

a communication controller that intercepts the data information transmitted through the communication link and, based on the data flow rules as selected by a position of the switch and a provided password, regulates a further flow of the data information through the communication link.

(*See also* Independent Claim 44.)

Furthermore, the Office has not commented on the “memory device for storing data flow rules of the communications link” as claimed by the Applicants in claim 14 that is not taught or suggested by Reardon or Horn, singly or in combination.

Claims 5-13 are dependent on Claim 1; Claims 15-20 and 22-30 are dependent on Claim 14, Claims 35-43 are dependent on Claim 31, and Claims 45-54 are dependent on claim 44 respectively and thus include this limitation over the prior art.

Accordingly, the present invention as now claimed is not suggested by the cited art. Reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectively requested.

Regarding Objections to the Claims

Claim 21 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. However, the claim has not been amended because it is believed that the base claim is allowable for the reasons discussed above.

Accordingly, the present invention as now claimed is not believed to be anticipated or made obvious from the cited art or any of the prior art. Removal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) and acceptance of Claims 1-55 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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